

Introduced by Senator Block

February 18, 2016

An act to add Section 6060.1.5 to the Business and Professions Code, relating to the State Bar Act.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1257, as introduced, Block. State Bar: admission: license: pro bono service requirement.

Existing law, the State Bar Act, requires an applicant for admission and a license to practice law, to meet certain requirements, including, but not limited to, having completed certain legal education in a law school, law office, or judge's chambers, passed an examination in professional responsibility, and passed the general bar examination. Existing law prohibits a person from practicing law in this state unless he or she is an active member of the State Bar.

This bill would additionally require an applicant, prior to filing an application for admission and a license to practice, to complete at least 50 hours of supervised pro bono service, as specified, in order to supplement the applicant's legal education with practical legal work experience. Upon completion of the pro bono service requirement, the bill would require an applicant to complete, sign, and submit a form to the State Bar confirming completion of the pro bono service.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. Section 6060.1.5 is added to the Business and
- 2 Professions Code, to read:

1 6060.1.5. (a) In addition to satisfying the requirements in
2 Section 6060, irrespective of the manner or law school in which
3 an applicant acquires his or her legal education, an applicant for
4 admission and a license to practice shall complete at least 50 hours
5 of pro bono service prior to filing an application. The purpose of
6 this pro bono legal service is to supplement the applicant's legal
7 education with practical legal work experience.

8 (b) The pro bono service shall be supervised by an active
9 licensed attorney in good standing. Unless the service is completed
10 in California, the supervisor is not required to be licensed to
11 practice law in this state.

12 (c) For the purposes of this section, "pro bono service" means
13 work that does either of the following:

14 (1) Assists in the provision of legal services without charge for
15 persons of limited means, not-for-profit organizations, or
16 individuals, groups, or organizations seeking to secure or promote
17 access to justice, including, but not limited to, the protection of
18 civil rights, civil liberties, or public rights.

19 (2) Assists in the provision of legal assistance in public service
20 for a judicial, legislative, executive, or other governmental entity.

21 (d) Subject to subdivision (b), the 50 hours of pro bono service,
22 or any portion thereof, may be completed in any state or territory
23 of the United States, the District of Columbia, or any foreign
24 country.

25 (e) The 50 hours of pro bono service shall be provided after the
26 commencement of the applicant's legal studies, and prior to filing
27 an application for admission and a license to practice.

28 (f) Upon completion of the pro bono service requirement, an
29 applicant shall complete a form describing the nature and dates of
30 pro bono service and the number of hours completed. Both the
31 applicant and the supervising attorney shall sign the form. The
32 applicant shall submit the signed form to the State Bar.

33 (g) No applicant may satisfy any part of the 50-hour requirement
34 by participating in any partisan political activities.